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COMMUNICATION STANDARDS:

THE PRINCIPLES AND PROTOCOLS FOR STANDARD-SETTING INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE COMMUNICATION[©]

James E. Lukaszewski, *ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA*
White Plains, New York, U.S.A.

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ABSTRACT

Webster defines a standard as something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value, or quality. When it comes to crisis communication, that authority is derived from the expectations of constituents – usually those most directly affected by the problem your organization has caused or is causing.

Principles are comprehensive, yet fundamental rules, laws, doctrines, or assumptions. Here again, in the matter of crisis communication management, the explanations that will be necessary and the understanding that must be achieved rapidly have to be based on solid thinking, fundamentally sound approaches, and predetermined standards of conduct that are publicly acceptable.

Protocols are detailed plans and procedures. In this case, the protocols described here are based on standards and principles, which time and experience have demonstrated are so critical to effective crisis communication management.

For an existing plan, the first place to begin analyzing its effectiveness is against these standards. As potential models for a planning process, plans from other companies or organizations should be tested against these standards, too.

Time and time again when we analyze how poor, delayed, or unnecessarily manipulative communication has damaged or destroyed the reputation, credibility, brand name, or the future of an individual, organization, or product, it often seems that then, and only then, does the search begin for the rules and tests to apply to achieve effective, problem-anticipating, ethically sound communication.

This monograph, which is based on handling hundreds of hands-on situations, outlines standard-setting protocols and fundamentally sound approaches that meet or exceed constituent or community communication expectations. The standards are divided into three categories: communication goals; fundamental communication principles; and standard communication protocols.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James E. Lukaszewski (loo-ka-SHEV-skee) advises, coaches, and counsels the men and women who run very large corporations and organizations. He is an expert in managing and counteracting tough, touchy, sensitive corporate communications issues. The fastest growing portion of his practice involves civil and criminal litigation. He is one of the few who can and truly does coach CEOs.

He is a prolific author (several books, hundreds of articles), lecturer (corporate, college and university), coach, and counselor. He is quoted in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Miami Herald*, the *Harvard Business Review*, and industry trade journals. He is a columnist, advisor, or editor for almost every major public relations periodical. His 1992 book, *Influencing Public Attitudes: Strategies that Reduce the Media's Power*, remains a classic work in the field of direct communication. He is the author of the four-volume *Executive Action® Crisis Communication Management System* and has published 26 unabridged monographs on critical communication subjects since 1994. His newest book, *Why Should the Boss Listen to You?*, was published by Jossey-Bass in 2008.

He is an internationally recognized speaker on crisis management, ethics, media relations, public affairs, and reputation preservation and restoration. Visiting his Web site, www.e911.com, is like attending the University of Crisis Management.

An accredited member of the International Association of Business Communicators (ABC) and the Public Relations Society of America (APR), Mr. Lukaszewski is a member of the PRSA's College of Fellows (Fellow PRSA) and Board of Ethics & Professional Standards. He served as a crisis communications advisor to the International Disaster Advisory Committee, Agency for International Development, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance from 1989 to 1992, and is a civilian advisor to several other federal agencies. He lectures annually at the U.S. Marine Corp's East Coast Commander's Media Training Symposium and was the second recipient of its Drew Middleton Award. He is the recipient of both Ball State University's 2004 National Public Relations Achievement Award and the 2004 Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service to PRSA, and is among the winners of the 2005 *PR News* Lifetime Achievement Award. His name appeared in *Corporate Legal Times* as one of "28 Experts to Call When All Hell Breaks Loose," and in *PR Week* as one of 22 "crunch-time counselors who should be on the speed dial in a crisis."